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PROGRAM Good Morning, America

STATION WJLA TV
ABC Network

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CITY Washington, D. C.

SUBJECT Commentary by Jack Anderson

JACK ANDERSON: State Department officials are dismayed over the breakdown in the effort to free the American hostages. The Iranian militants, according to one report, will try to drag out the negotiations for another six months. By that time, the hostages may suffer serious psychological injury. But there's one straw in the wind.

Iranian leaders are secretly considering a proposal to release the fifty American hostages to an American congressional group. Of course, this would have to wait until the election of a new Iranian Parliament in April. The concept of a people-to-people exchange appeals to the Iranian leaders. You see, representatives of the Iranian people would return the hostages to representatives of the American people. This would enable the Iranians to free the hostages without losing face.

Well, all I can tell you is that the idea is under serious consideration by top Iranian leaders. But in chaotic Iran, nothing is certain.

David?

DAVID HARTMAN: Thank you, Jack.

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